

# Tourism Scan

Vol. 4 Issue 10 November 2007

This is a communiqué of the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism

9/1, Rattanakosin Road, T Watget, Muang Chiang Mai 5000 Thailand

Tel/Fax.: +66-53-240 026 www.ecotonline.org E-mail: contours@ecotonline.org

---

Editorial & Layout: Julia Schönhärl

---

## In this issue:

- Urbanization: how will it impact on tourism?
- Alarming data confirm human fingerprint
- Carbon Offsets: Paying off Unsustainable Life Styles or Investing in Sustainability
- Tourism - an efficient tool to advance international peace and understanding
- Southeast Asia's sex tourism – it goes on, and one, and on...
- Archbishop of Mumbai against SEZ
- Insight Chiang Mai
- Announcements

## Urbanization: how will it impact on tourism?

Twenty-one major cities are reported to be in most danger of rising sea levels, one of the effects of climate change, as a recently released report by the Worldwatch Institute announced. According to the Associated Press, the most vulnerable cities will count at least an 8-million population by 2015. Cities identified as "highly vulnerable" i.e. in danger by climate change effects, while housing a total of 10% of the world's population are: New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Bangkok, Jakarta, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Shanghai, Cairo, Mumbai and Karachi, according to Australia's News.com. Unplanned and chaotic urbanization is taking a huge toll on human health and the quality of the environment, contributing to social, ecological, and economic instability. Of the 3 billion urban dwellers today, 1 billion live in "slums," defined as areas where people cannot secure key necessities. An estimated 1.6 million urban residents die each year due to lack of clean water and sanitation as a result.

There are no data available to predict how the growing urbanization in the light of the predicted environmental threats will impact on people's leisure and travel behaviour. As income discrepancies between the rich and poor continue to rise at a fast speed, the potential for social conflict is also likely to rise between different citizen groups around the need of "leisure city environments" for the middle class and the rich versus mere housing space for the poor and migrants. The challenge to satisfy all of them is growing. But what does that mean for tourism development? And for the markets and products have to be created to satisfy a new supposedly new demand pattern of all these groups? How can future tourism be managed sustainable, fair and responsible?

Tourism activists around the world should start thinking in new dimensions and plan ahead appropriate action. Let's use the *WorldSocialForum Action week* (see Announcement) to liaise in the Global Tourism Intervention Forum and discuss this issue!

## Alarming data confirm human fingerprint

The pace of climate change is very likely to increase over the 21st century and "the impact at tourism destinations will be felt in mountain regions, coastal areas and natural and cultural heritage sites," according to the *Global Change and Tourism University of*

*Waterloo.* Geographical and seasonal shifts have already seen the implications of the change to tourism demand. One survey conducted in the UK revealed that 70 percent of respondents believe air travel harms the environment, 64 percent agree the price of the environmental damage should be reflected on plane tickets, 26 percent would pay a fare premium for up to 10 percent for eco-friendly flights, while 24 percent said air travel should be avoided all together. If we can believe those data, there seems to be a great awareness, already!

Carbon dioxide emissions from air transport contribute 40 percent to global tourism emissions (followed by car transport at 32 percent share) as eTurboNews reports. In the Caribbean, warmer summers, increase in extreme events like hurricanes, sea level rising, loss of marine diversity, and a political disability to respond, is likely to threaten more than 50 percent of the Caribbean population which lives within 1.5 km. of the shore. Scientific groups speak in unison about mitigating tourism emission contribution through high tech efficiency scenarios, reduction in aviation energy, and reduction in car emissions.

Despite early impacts of climate change can be effectively addressed through adaptation of humankind, we must be aware that the options from successful adaptation diminish and the associated costs go up. ECOT is wondering if the industry will really be capable to acknowledge its potential and take a lead on climate change issues as scientists request...

Source: [www.eTurboNews.com](http://www.eTurboNews.com), October 24, 3007

### **Carbon Offsets: Paying off Unsustainable Life Styles or Investing in Sustainability**

Michael Kaye has published his critical thoughts at [www.planeta.com](http://www.planeta.com) where he writes: 'As far as I can figure out, the way it is supposed to work is that we add up all the carbon our vacation spews into the atmosphere. Then using math way beyond the power of mere mortals to understand, experts calculate the amount of money that it would take to remove the carbon that we have put in. We then fork over this money to carbon offset brokers, and, after covering their overhead and administrative expenses, they spend the money on sequestering carbon by natural means, or on developing renewable energy technologies that will, they claim, result in a smaller carbon footprint from the same activities in the future. (...) It is a brilliantly seductive strategy. With a small manageable financial sacrifice we "offset" (or should it be buy off) our life styles. Any scheme that allows sustainability gurus to guiltlessly fly around in private jets and contaminate the atmosphere much more than the ordinary citizen has got to be worthy of our respect. For the full article see: [www.planeta.com](http://www.planeta.com)

### **Tourism - an efficient tool to advance international peace and understanding**

Tourism is growing steadily and needs to be viewed in its social, cultural and ethical dimensions and therefore in its potential contribution to the Alliance of Civilizations. This was at the heart of the 3-day 'International Conference on Tourism, Religions and the Dialogue of Cultures' in Cordoba, Spain. Tourism shares with religions and civilizations values such as tolerance, respect of diversity, respect of nature, rediscovery of oneself and of the others. Given its sustained growth and resilience, the sector is in fact in the ideal position to contribute to facing the main global challenges of our societies. At the conference, various dimensions of the relationship between tourism and inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue were explored. Some of the main conclusions and outcomes of the Conference include:

- Given its present and expected growth, tourism represents a real tool to complement economic development with a real contribution to the Alliance of Civilizations.
- Religious and cultural tourism is clearly on the rise worldwide, as was reflected in the diversity of backgrounds of the participants, coming from every continent of the world and representatives from all faiths.
- The immense variety of religious tourism destinations, the diversity and specificity of sanctuaries and sacred sites calls on the importance of promoting the sustainable development of religious destinations through sound congestion management of sites and places of worship, and improved safeguard and conservation of religious heritage.
- A dynamic relationship between religious and cultural heritage values needs to be developed in order to serve the interests of residents, tourists and the religious community.
- The authenticity and the core feature of religious sites and cultural routes need to be maintained, while the importance of intangible heritage and ancient traditions must be communicated efficiently to bring visitors closer to the values and spirituality of the host community.

The 'International Conference on Tourism, Religions and the Dialogue of Cultures' was convened by UNWTO and attended by some 300 participants from over 80 countries.

*Source: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)*

### **Southeast Asia's sex tourism – it goes on, and one, and on...**

Asian countries, including Thailand, India and the Philippines, have long been prime destinations for child sex tourists," said Jeff Avina, director of operations at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Vienna. As India tries to get more visitors to its shores, experts are warning that child sex tourism is raising its head in a dangerous way, not just in tourist havens but also in religious hubs in Tamil Nadu and Orissa (<http://www.ecpat.net/> ). "India is among the most rapidly growing economies in the world and the introduction of economy airlines, the development of untapped destinations, improved infrastructure and new modes of tourism - such as eco and experiential tourism - have brought tourists even closer to unexposed communities."

According to the Ministry of Tourism, tourist arrivals in the country rose from 3.92 million in 2005 to 4.43 million in 2006, showing a sharp increase of 13 percent.

At a recent Euro-Asian Police Conference in Bangkok showed that despite some high-profile arrests and prosecutions, efforts to keep children safe from pedophiles have been hampered by the lack of cooperation among governments and the lack of awareness among government officials, as well as grinding poverty and poor policing as human rights activist point out.

ECPAT says that Vietnamese children are being sent to Cambodia, China, Malaysia and Taiwan for abuse. Malaysia has become a transit and destination country for human trafficking.

In the Philippines, human rights groups estimate there are around 1.5 million street children, many employed in bars where they easily end up as sex workers. In Indonesia, about 40-70,000 Indonesian children fall into the sex trade each year, two thirds of them trafficked abroad, an ECPAT activist told AFP news agency.

Cambodia's official statement is outrageous saying that it can't "deny that Asian men like to have sex with children, but there is very little information about this"!

## **Archbishop of Mumbai against SEZ**

The Archbishop of Mumbai, expressed concern on the risk of dividing communities and causing violence due to the displacement of residents in 10 villages of Uttan Gorai area to make way for the second largest Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Maharashtra state. He urged everyone to take part in rallies and other initiatives for the rights and livelihood of fishermen and farm labourers and remarked that the Church is particularly concerned about the long-term effects of this policy. Source: AsiaNews

For more information and insights on SEZ and STZ - Special Tourism Zones: CONTOURS 'Special Tourism Zones' (No 1/2007) available from [www.ecotonline.org/publications/contours](http://www.ecotonline.org/publications/contours); and EQUATIONS SE(I)ZING India through Tourism , March 2007. available from EQUATIONS: [info@equitabletourism.org](mailto:info@equitabletourism.org) ([www.equitabletourism.org](http://www.equitabletourism.org))

## **Insight Chiang Mai**

Soon, Chiang Mai residents and hordes of tourists will line up the Mae Ping River to watch the Loy Krathong festival activities: on the full moon of the 12th month the traditional Thai lunar calendar, people celebrate this day with origins in India as a Hindu festival, and see floating lanterns for giving life throughout the year on the water in little banana tree trunk boats (or in the modern-day versions of styrofoam), decorated with banana leaves, flowers, candles, incense sticks etc. Governmental offices, corporations and other organizations also build much bigger and more elaborate rafts, and these are often judged in contests. According to the writings of H.M. King Rama IV in 1863, the originally Brahmanical festival was adapted by Buddhists in Thailand as a ceremony to honour the Lord Buddha. The act of floating away the candle raft is symbolic of letting go of all one's grudges, anger and defilements, so that one can start life afresh on a better foot.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## **Announcements**

### **Debate on Tourism to Myanmar / Burma**

ECOT continues to collect articles around the heated up debate on **Tourism to Myanmar/Burma**. You can find a selection of articles on [www.ecotonline.org/campaign](http://www.ecotonline.org/campaign). If you want to share any activities, thoughts and opinion, please write to [contours@ecotonline.org](mailto:contours@ecotonline.org)

**World Social Forum in 2008:** In 2008, there will be no single World social Forum as in the past. Instead, manifold events will take place around the world, organized at a country and regional level. In order to facilitate information exchange and coordination, WSF organizing committee put in place the website: [www.wsfprocess.net](http://www.wsfprocess.net) where you can join the process online. Please note that ECOT registered as the **Global Tourism Intervention Forum (GTIF)** which was founded at WSF 2005, and we welcome you to join this group for further info exchange on some activities

[http://wsfprocess.net/groups/gtif-global-tourism-intervention-forum/team\\_participation](http://wsfprocess.net/groups/gtif-global-tourism-intervention-forum/team_participation)

Please write to [julia@ecotonline.org](mailto:julia@ecotonline.org) to share your plans, actions and find partners.

In addition, you are invited to sign the 'ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE' online signature campaign at [www.wsf2008.net](http://www.wsf2008.net)

**The 2nd International Conference for Accessible Tourism (ICAT 2007),**

22 - 24 November 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand.  
Theme: Promoting Sustainable Tourism towards an Inclusive, Barrier-Free and Rights-Based Society: Opportunity for all

Contours –Writer Scott Rains will do a presentation! For more information:

<http://www.dpiap.org/index.html>



**II INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

Fortaleza -Ce / Brazil 12, 13, 14 and 15 of May 2008

TERRAMAR INSTITUTE is organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> SITS with the objective to publicize community and nature conservation tourism as a strategy to valorise local culture, protecting the environment and reduce poverty in Latin America. For more information: [terramar@terramar.org.br](mailto:terramar@terramar.org.br)

**IUCN - The World Conservation Forum:** The World Conservation Congress will take place in Spain from 5 to 14 October 2008. IUCN has a long history of focusing on nature- and ecotourism as means of conservation and protection. This event will be an opportunity to debate pressing issues and their solutions for sustainable development – where tourism can play a role. For more information: <http://www.iucn.org/congress/2008/congress.htm>

**IUCN on tourism:** <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/subject/tourism.html>